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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 001045

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PINR](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: CABRAL IS BACK

REF: A. ASUNCION 556

[1](#)B. ASUNCION 531

[1](#)C. ASUNCION 370

[1](#)D. ASUNCION 301

[1](#)E. 04 ASUNCION 1606 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Keane, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action message. See final Paragraph.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: I called Duarte Frutos on August 18. After conversing about the successful visit of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, I noted my concern about persistent reports reaching me that drug-smuggling-tainted police commissioner Aristides Cabral would be assigned a powerful police job. Duarte indicated that he may have to give Cabral a job in response to intense pressure from Congressional leaders whose help he needs for legislation (reftel A), but it will not be a position that we believe would undermine efforts to curb drug trafficking or other major organized crime. Action Requested: I urge Ambassador Spalding be called in to register USG concern. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) Background: Cabral's ties to drug traffickers and our demarches to the GOP regarding him have been documented in our reporting since twelve months ago. Under our pressure, the President got him to submit his request for retirement. (See reftel A). The Police Commander has not acted on that request, so Cabral is in the "freezer", unassigned but earning his salary. When I asked the Police Commander a month ago why Cabral was still on the rolls (and therefore eligible at any time to be assigned to a position), the Commander said that Cabral wanted to stay in pay status until he completes 30 years in order to avoid a reduced annuity. However, we continue to receive reports that Cabral has been working the Paraguayan Congress and other friends to be reinstated and promoted, with the idea that he could become Police Commander. I raised this with the President approximately a month ago and was told "not to worry, Cabral will not be promoted or assigned to any significant job; he's in the freezer."

[1](#)4. (C) In recent days, our sources in Ciudad del Este have reported that people there expect Cabral to return to that critical city, a location where a corrupt police official could ensure protection not only for drug traffickers, but for terrorist fundraisers, IPR pirates and other organized crime kingpins. On August 18, I got word that Cabral was expected to be named Police Commissioner in Ciudad del Este on August 19.

[1](#)5. (C) I called Duarte and after exchanging comments about the successful visit of Secretary Rumsfeld, I noted my concern about Cabral. Paraguayan and U.S. interests in fighting drug traffickers and other major organized crime activities would be set back if Cabral is assigned to Ciudad del Este or any other sensitive city (Asuncion, Pedro Juan Caballero) as Police Commissioner. Duarte lamely said that he is getting intense pressure from Congress for Cabral's promotion and for his assignment, and that he needs these Congress people for passage of critical legislation. I replied that he is well aware of the dossier we have on Cabral based on our previous detailed discussions and the material I showed him, but I could give him a copy if he desired and needed it to fend off pressures. Cabral's assignment to a sensitive position, I stressed, would be unacceptable to us and would damage Paraguay; why didn't he assign him to a non-sensitive job such as head of security for one of the dams or the electrical company, all of which pay better? Finally, Duarte said that he would consider his options, but that Cabral would probably be given a job, although not one which could affect U.S. critical interests.

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: The continuing saga of trying to prevent this accomplice of narcotics traffickers from rising to the top of the police or getting powerful positions has been discouraging and troubling. It's obvious that Cabral has extraordinary support among very powerful senators of the Colorado Party and the other parties which have formed an alliance with the Colorados. Most of the reports we receive about Cabral's machinations revolve around Senator Galaverna, Colorado Party Chief in that body. Duarte's appeasement of powerful senators in this case, however, shows that his commitment to fighting corruption is sometimes compromised. I urge the Department to call in Amb. Spalding to buttress our efforts to prevent Cabral from moving into a position

which could undermine our gains against organized crime.
KEANE